COMPUTER Napoleonics™

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

RULE BOOK
& Historical Background

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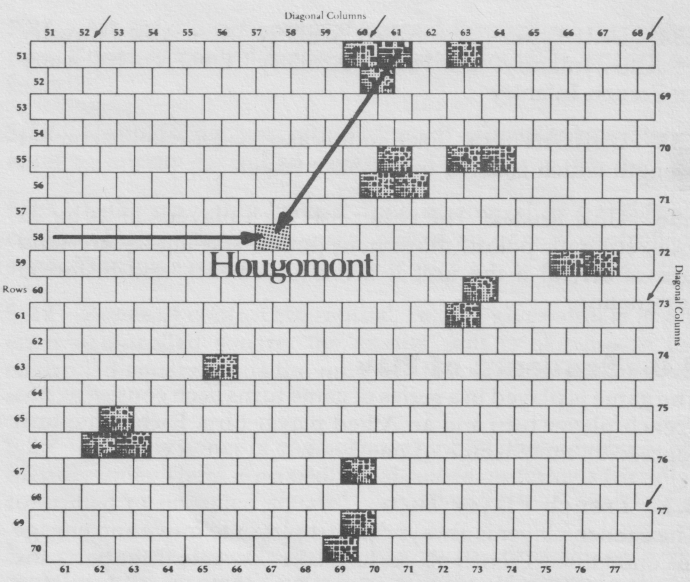


1.0 Introduction

1.1 Description of Play

Computer Napoleonics: The Battle of Waterloo is a division level simulation of the battle of Waterloo, the decisive final encounter between the Allied Armies of England and Prussia and the French Armee Du Nord. The battle of Waterloo, Napoleon Bonaparte's last battle, took place on June 18, 1815. Computer Napoleonics is both a two-player and a solitaire game. One player commands the forces of Napoleon while the other player (or the computer) commands the forces of the Anglo-Allied-Prussian armies. The players take turns moving their units and engaging in combat. The outcome of each individual engagement is determined by the computer in accordance with the probabilities given in the Combat Results Table. Play continues in this fashion for ten game turns or until one side has successfully fulfilled its victory conditions.

The game map displayed on the video screen is divided into bricks (referred to as squares) in order to regulate movement and combat. Each square represents 400 meters of terrain while each combat unit represents artillery, cavalry or infantry formations of approximately division size. Each game turn represents one hour of real time.

1.2 Talking to the Computer

Whenever entering a command to the computer complete your command by pressing the 'return' key (often referred to by the symbol (CR) which stands for carriage return). To correct a mistake use the 'back arrow' key to go backwards, then type over the mistake.

1.3 Saving a Game

Upon the completion of each player's combat execution phase the computer will allow the player(s) to save the game in progress. If you choose to save the game you will need a scratch disc to store the data. Once the game is saved you will be able to restart it from the point at which you left off.

1.4 Mapboard Coordinates

To identify a particular square on the map, first read the row number and then the column number. For example, Hougomont is located in square 5861. The row numbers are located on the left-hand side of the maps, while the column numbers are located around the top, bottom, and right-hand sides of the maps.

1.5 Starting a Game

To begin a game, boot your game disc and the game will begin automatically.

2.0 General Description

2.1 Parts Inventory

A) Game Box
B) Rule Book
C) 5¼" Game Disc
D) Two Mapboard Charts
E) Two Game Information Cards

2.2 Definition of Terms

2.21 Movement Allowance: The maximum number of squares which a unit may be moved in a single movement phase, expressed in Movement Points.

2.22 Combat Strength: The relative strength of a unit with regard to attack and defense, expressed in terms of Strength Points.

2.3 Mapboard Codes

2.31 General: The game map represents the actual ground in Belgium over which the Battle of Waterloo was fought. The entire map consists of 20 horizontal rows and 18 diagonal columns and is accurately represented on the two mapboards.

2.32 Terrain: There are four types of terrain — woods, clear, village and chateau. Terrain affects the movement and combat strength of units as per the Terrain Effects Chart. There is actually a fifth type of terrain (crest) that has no effect on the game. Crests are shown as lines on the mapboard and represent the tops of the many hills that were on the battlefield. Crests do not affect movement or combat and are included only for historical interest.

2.33 Combat Units: Each unit is represented by a two-letter identification; the first letter indicates the unit type (i.e., Artillery, Cavalry or Infantry) and nationality (i.e., Allied or French) and the second letter indicates the relative unit strength.

2.34 Unit Type: A = Allied Artillery C = Allied Cavalry I = Allied Infantry a = French Artillery c = French Cavalry i = French Infantry

2.35 Unit Strength: Each unit is assigned a relative combat strength which is listed on the unit roster.

2.36 Unit Roster: The roster lists each player's units by ID code, strength points, movement points, starting square (and turn of arrival if the unit is a reinforcement), and historical designation.

3.0 Sequence of Play

The game is played in a series of game turns each consisting of a French player turn and an Allied player turn. Each game turn represents the passage of one hour.

3.1 French Player Turn

The French player is always the first player to move and engage in combat. The French player turn is broken into three parts, the French movement phase, the French combat set-up phase, and the French combat resolution phase.

3.11 French Movement Phase: The player commanding the French army moves each of his units on the mapboard in any order he chooses, within the limitations imposed by the Movement rules. As orders are given, the computer moves each unit to its new position. A player may cancel the orders given to a particular unit by entering a move command after which the unit will be returned to its original position and new movement orders may be given. When the French player is satisfied with his moves, he enters the appropriate command to end the Movement Phase.

3.12 French Combat Set-up Phase: The French player must now attack all enemy units which are adjacent to any French units. Combat is mandatory. The French player enters combat orders for each of his units participating in combat (i.e., any units which are adjacent to an enemy unit plus any artillery units which are within range and which the French player wishes to use).

3.13 French Combat Resolution Phase: The French player instructs the computer to resolve all of the combats he has set up during the combat set-up phase. Combat results are given and any retreats or advances are conducted.

3.2 Save Game Phase

The player(s) may save the game and/or continue.

3.3 Allied Player Turn

The Allied player (or the computer) now moves his units and engages in combat in the same fashion as the French player.

3.31 Allied Movement Phase The Allied player (or the computer) moves each of his units in the same manner as the French moved the French army.

3.32 Allied Combat Set-up Phase The Allied player (or the computer) declares his attacks to the computer.

3.33 Allied Combat Resolution Phase The Allied player (or the computer) resolves all combat previously set up.

3.4 Save Game Phase

Once again the player(s) may save the game and/or continue.

3.5 Repeat steps 3.1–3.4 until ten complete game turns have been played or until a winner is declared (whichever comes first).

4.0 General Commands

Commands are divided into two general categories: movement commands and combat commands.

4.1 Movement Commands

4.11 Initial Computer Query:
"ENTER ID OF UNIT YOU WISH TO MOVE–"
Possible player responses:

xx – Move unit with ID xx.

FX – List the French units that have exited from the map.

NM – New map.

DM – Done moving.

4.12 Initial Computer Query:
"MP'S LEFT=n. ENTER MOVE–"
Possible player responses:

d – Move the unit one square in direction d.

'return' (also known as CR) – End the move of the unit currently moving.

Mdd...d – Move the unit one square in each direction listed in the order that the directions are listed and then end that unit's move.

4.2 Combat Commands

4.21 Initial Computer Query:
"ENTER ID OF UNIT YOU WISH TO ATTACK–"
Possible player responses:

xx – Attack the enemy unit with ID xx.

?xx – List units attacking unit xx.

Mxxyyyy...yy – Conduct multiple attack of unit xx with units yyyy...yy.

VV – Print in inverse video the ID's of enemy units which must be attacked.

NM – New map.

DA – Done attacking.

4.22 Initial Computer Query:
"ENTER ID OF AN ATTACKING UNIT–"
Possible player responses:

xx – Attack with unit xx.

Rxx – Remove unit xx from the attack.

Q – Quit attacking the unit.

4.23 Initial Computer Query:
"WHICH ENEMY UNIT DO YOU WISH TO RESOLVE COMBAT FOR–"
Possible player responses:

xx – Resolve combat against unit xx.

NM – New map.

Auto – Automatically resolve all remaining combats and end the combat and execution phase.

4.3 Examples of the Use of Movement Orders

4.31 For the French to move unit ie from square 6463 to square 6365 on the first turn the French player may enter one of the two following sets of commands during the French movement phase.

A) ie(CR) 2(CR) 2(CR) 1(CR) (CR). This will move unit ie in direction 2 for two squares and then in direction 1 for one square with the movement of each square occurring after each (CR).

(B) ie(CR) M221(CR). This will also result in a move of

two squares in direction 2 and then a move of one square in direction 1. This is a shortcut way of moving units if you know in advance where you wish them to move.

4.4 Examples of the Use of Combat Commands

4.41 Assume unit cg is in square 6767, unit ij is in square 6667, unit ae is in square 6766, and unit IO is in square 6768. If the French player wished to attack unit IO with units cg,ij,ae then he may enter one of the two following sets of commands during the French combat set-up phase.

A) IO(CR) cg(CR) ij(CR) ae(CR) Q(CR).

B) MIOcgijae(CR).

4.42 Now let's assume the French player has set up the attack on unit IO but decides to use unit ae for another attack. To remove unit ae from the attack on IO enter the following:

IO(CR) Rae(CR).

4.5 IMPORTANT — REMEMBER THAT (CR) IS A SYMBOL USED TO REPRESENT THE APPLE 'return' KEY.

5.0 Movement

During each movement phase the phasing player may move any, all or none of his units. Units may be moved in any direction or combination of directions. A given unit's movement, however, is always restricted by the unit's Movement Points, as well as by restrictions imposed by terrain and other movement rules.

5.1 Movement Restrictions

5.11 Movement Points: Movement is calculated in terms of Movement Points. The number of Movement Points expended by a unit during a single Movement Phase may not exceed its total Movement Allowance.

5.12 The Movement Allowance of various units is as follows:

Artillery – 3 Movement Points

Infantry – 4 Movement Points

Cavalry and Horse Artillery – 5 Movement Points

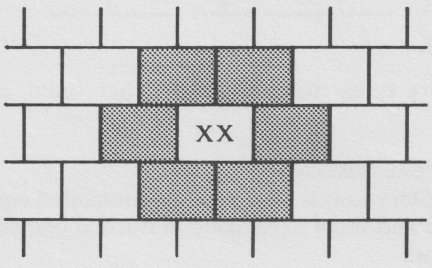
5.13 A unit may expend any portion of its Movement Allowance, but unused Movement Points may not be accumulated from one Movement Phase to the next or transferred from one unit to another.

5.14 A unit expends one movement point to enter a Clear, Village or Chateau square.

5.15 Woods squares are impassable; units are never allowed to enter a woods square.

5.2 Zones of Control

The six squares immediately adjacent to a square constitute the zones of control of any unit in that square. Squares upon which a unit exerts a zone of control are called controlled squares and inhibit the movement of enemy units. All units must cease movement when they enter an enemy controlled square.



5.21 All units exert zones of control throughout the game turn. Zones of control are never negated by units, enemy or friendly.

5.22 Units do not pay any additional movement points to enter an enemy controlled square.

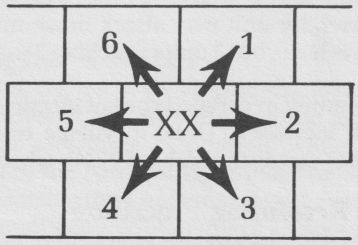
5.23 Units may only leave a zone of control as a result of combat. Units may never move out of an enemy controlled square during a movement phase.

5.24 Zones of control are mutual, i.e., if a given unit is in an enemy-controlled square, the enemy unit is likewise in its controlled square. Thus the units are locked into combat with each other.

5.25 Friendly zones of control never inhibit the movement of friendly units. There is no additional cost for entering a friendly controlled or occupied square.

5.3 Although friendly units may move through squares containing other friendly units, two units may never end a phase in the same square.

5.4 For the purposes of issuing movement commands, the various directions which a unit may move are assigned the following designations:



5.5 Only French units may move off the map. Units may only leave the right map edge between squares 5168 and 5871 (see section 10.1).

5.6 French units may not block Allied reinforcements. Thus French units may never enter a square in row 70.

6.0 Combat

6.1 Combat Set-up Rules

Combat between adjacent opposing units is mandatory. Artillery units are the only units which may attack units to which they are not adjacent (see Section 7.0). The player who has just completed moving is termed the Attacker; the other player is the Defender, regardless of the overall situation.

6.2 Which Units Attack

6.21 All units which end the movement phase in an enemy-controlled square must attack at least one enemy unit during the combat phase. Exception: The units in Hougomont and La Haye Sainte at the beginning of the game are never forced to attack (see section 8.0).

6.22 All enemy units that have friendly units in their zones of control must be attacked by at least one unit during the combat phase.

6.23 The Attacker may choose which attacking units will attack each defending unit, as long as all adjacent friendly units participate in an attack and so long as all adjacent enemy units are attacked.

6.24 An enemy unit may be attacked by up to six friendly units.

6.25 No unit may attack more than once per combat phase (although it may attack more than one unit) and no enemy unit may be attacked more than once per combat phase. Units may only attack a unit to which they are adjacent (exception: see section 7.0).

6.3 Multi-Unit Combat

6.31 If a unit is in the zone of control of more than one enemy unit, it must attack all of those units which are not being attacked by some other friendly unit.

6.32 Units in two or more different squares may combine their attack against a single adjacent enemy unit.

6.33 A single unit's combat strength may never be divided among different combats during the same combat phase.

6.34 A single attacking unit may attack more than one enemy unit in one attack.

6.35 A single defending unit may be attacked by more than one attacking unit in one combat.

6.36 If a friendly unit is attacking more than one enemy unit then no other friendly unit may attack those units (i.e., 1 unit attacking 2 units is legal, but 2 units attacking 3 units is not legal).

6.4 Units defending in certain types of terrain may have their combat strength increased. Units in village or chateau hexes have their combat strength doubled (2×) when defending.

6.5 Combat Resolution Procedure

After the attacker has allocated his attacks and issued his orders, the computer resolves each attack in the order of the attacker's choice. The computer automatically compares the total combined strength of the attacking units to the strength of the defending units in order to arrive at a combat ratio (3 to 1, 1 to 2, etc.). The ratio is always rounded down in favor of the defender. The computer then obtains a random number between zero and nine and consults the combat results table to arrive at a result.

6.6 Explanation of Combat Results:

AR – (Attacker Retreats) – All attacking units must move back one square. (The first unit retreated is the first unit selected as an attacker, the second unit is the second unit selected as an attacker, etc.)

DR – (Defender Retreats) – All defending units must move back one square.

AE – (Attacker Eliminated) – All attacking units are destroyed and removed from the game.

DE – (Defender Eliminated) – All defending units are destroyed and removed from the game.

EX – Exchange) – All defending units are eliminated. The attacker must lose at least an equal number of strength points from among the units which particpated in the attack and which are adjacent to the defender. Since whole units must be lost, the attacker may lose more strength points than the defender. The computer eliminates the first attacking unit that was ordered to attack, and then the second, etc., until enough attacking strength points have been eliminated to satisfy the exchange requirements.

6.7 A unit that is forced to retreat as a result of combat will automatically be retreated one square by the computer. Units may not retreat into a square they would normally be unable to move into (woods, row 70 for the French), nor may a unit retreat into an enemy-controlled square. Units may not retreat off the map or onto another friendly unit. If a retreating unit has no square to retreat to it is eliminated. Allied units will be retreated in direction 1 if possible. If direction 1 is blocked they will retreat in directions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 in that order of preference. French units will be retreated in direction 4 if possible. If direction 4 is blocked they will retreat in directions 5, 6, 1,2 3 in that order of preference.

6.8 Whenever, as a direct result of combat, a defending unit is retreated or eliminated, the attacking player may advance one of his surviving adjacent units (which participated in that attack) into the square formerly occupied by that enemy unit. This option must be exercised immediately. The advance may be made even if the advancing unit is still in an enemy unit's zone of control.

6.9 Retreating and advancing as a result of combat is not considered regular movement and is not counted as an expenditure of movement points.

7.0 Artillery

7.1 General

Unlike infantry and cavalry units, artillery units may participate in attacks against units to which they are not adjacent. This is called bombarding. An artillery unit may bombard a unit from a two-square distance. However, artillery units must participate in normal combat when adjacent to opposing units.

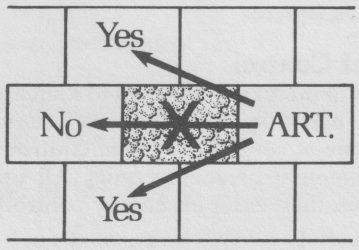
7.2 Artillery units may attack non-adjacent enemy units that are two squares distant (but no more). They are not forced to attack any units in this manner.

7.3 Range from the artillery unit is calculated by including the target square, but not the bombarding unit's square.

7.4 Artillery units may only attack a single enemy unit when bombarding.

7.5 Artillery attacking from a non-adjacent square, i.e., bombarding, suffer no adverse combat results; they are never eliminated or retreated as a result of their own attack.

7.6 An artillery unit may not bombard over a woods square.



7.7 Artillery units may fire over other units, enemy and friendly.

7.8 Adjacent Attacks

When an artillery unit is in an enemy-controlled square it may not bombard and must participate in normal combat as would any other unit.

7.9 An artillery unit may never add its combat strength to another unit's defensive value by bombardment. An artillery unit may only bombard during its own combat phase.

8.0 Chateau Garrison Units

The two chateau garrison units (Hougomont-IR and La Haye Sainte-IS) are affected by special rules.

8.1 Movement

Neither unit may move.

8.2 Combat

Neither unit may attack nor are they ever forced to attack. Also if either unit is forced to retreat it is eliminated.

9.0 Reinforcements

The Allied player receives Prussian reinforcements during the Allied movement phase of turns three, four, five, and six. These units are automatically placed on the mapboard at the beginning of the movement phase and may be moved normally once on the map. Since French units may not enter row 70 the reinforcements will always appear if there are no Allied units in squares 7072 to 7075. If any Allied unit is in square 7072, 7073, 7074, or 7075 then all of the future Prussian reinforcements are delayed one turn.

10.0 Victory Conditions

10.1 French Victory

The French player wins if his army destroys 50 Allied strength points and exits any seven of his units off of the right map edge between hexes 5168 and 5871.

10.2 Allied Victory

The Allied player wins if his army destroys 40 French strength points before the French have destroyed 50 Allied strength points.

10.3 The game is declared a draw if neither player succeeds in fulfilling his victory conditions by the end of the tenth game turn.

10.4 Allied Demoralization

If the French have destroyed 50 Allied strength points but have not yet exited seven units off the map then the Allied units are considered to be demoralized. The effect this has on the game is to shift the combat ratio one column in favor of the French. Examples: A French attack of 1 to 1 against a demoralized Allied unit would become 2 to 1. An Allied attack of 3 to 1 would become 2 to 1.

11.0 Solitaire

In the solitaire game the computer commands the Anglo-Allied armies. In the solitaire game, in order to provide the player with a greater challenge, it is necessary for the French player to eliminate 60 Allied strength points in order to cause Allied demoralization and in order to win the game (instead of the 50 required in the two-player game).

12.0 Designer's Notes

This game was designed to be an introductory type wargame. The two major design criteria were that the game play fast (1 evening) and be as simple as possible while still giving the players the feel of the battle of Waterloo. The biggest problem came from the fact that the Chateaus offered excellent defensive positions for small groups of soldiers (Napoleon never took Hougomont). The decision to create another unit type (garrison) does detract from simplicity, but adds so much to the realism that it was deemed worthwhile.

For years I've enticed friends into wargaming by saying "How 'bout a fast basic wargame." Now I can add the extra enticement: "on my home computer!"

—John Lyon

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WATERLOO: Test of the Titans

As the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte stood on the forward slope of the hill at La Belle Alliance and looked across to where the English-Dutch-Belgian army was preparing to meet his attack, many things must have been on his mind. It was June 18, 1815, and the sun was struggling through the clouds, but the fields all around were wet and muddy from the previous day's rain. Many things had happened in the past three months, after his arrival on the French coast with a few faithful followers who had shared his exile during the past year on the little island of Elba.

He was already one of the titans of his time. Again and again he had taken his highly effective artillery, his fervidly loyal infantry, his Imperial Guard against odds which would have been considered hopeless by ordinary military leaders. But again and again he had led them from the field in triumph. He had established a record of victories which would make many later experts judge him the greatest of generals.

After years of fighting nearly alone against all the major powers of Europe, he had finally been forced to abdicate, to take his faithful few for those long months of exile at Elba. There, the best military mind in history would be left to content itself with mulling over the old victories – or so his conquerors thought. But it had not turned out that way. He, the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, had not been willing to settle for memories of past triumphs. He had followed closely events in France, noting with satisfaction stories of the dissatisfaction of the people with the fat old king (placed back on the throne by France's conquerors). He had bided his time, prepared himself, and waited.

When he had moved, the victory had been nearly immediate. Landing in southern France with only a thousand followers, he had proceeded to Paris in a kind of triumphal procession – persuading some, intimidating others, and inspirng nearly everyone to feel that the old Napoleon was again on the way to power and victory...that this time he would be truly irresistable. Neary everyone – former generals, officers, common men in the ranks alike – had joined him with a wild release of patriotic energy too long contained.

He had had little to work with. Whole armies with their supplies had to be created. But he had an immense advantage. He had the men – men enthused with the thought of fighting again under their old leader. Soon chaos had turned to order under his firm direction. And by the time the Allies – horrified at his return to France and intent only on putting him away again, this time for good – had begun to muster their power against him, he already had armies in the field and a plan to use them against his powerful enemies.

Landing in southern France March 1, 1815, Napoleon, by March 20, had again assumed his position as the Emperor of France; the fat old king had fled, and the Emperor's plans for defending his country against the armies waiting to invade it were taking shape in his mind.

His position was not an easy one. He was about to be invaded by a number of armies, one made up of British and Dutch-Belgian allies; one from Prussia; another from Russia; and a fourth from Austria. And each of them would be as large or larger than the army he would be able to muster to fight against all of them. If he merely waited for them to combine their forces and move against him, even the great Napoleon would be helpless to prevent them from destroying him. The prospects might have intimidated a lesser commander. But that was why they were lesser commanders, and he was Napoleon. He would not wait. He would do as he had always done – take the initiative, make a plan to exploit whatever weakness he found among the strength of his foes, and then, with his old ability to seek out the moment and the place least expected, pounce and clap shut the trap.

Through his two decades of campaigning, Napoleon had developed a remarkably effective strategic pattern for destroying armies usually outnumbering his own. Because the armies of his day had to live, when not facing prospect of immediate battle, spread out over a large amount of territory (in order to provide for the large amount of supplies for both men and horses), a major advantage was offered to the army which could first find its enemy and, most importantly, concentrate all its forces against only a part of its opponent's. This need for quick concentration was especially important when one side was made up of armies of two or more allies, when all kinds of problems of separate supply lines and leadership jealousy were brought suddenly into focus. With no single leader having power to make the necessary decisions while the issue was still in doubt, concentration would be that much more delayed.

Thus Napoleon had learned, when advancing against two or more allies, to keep his army in a formation which could do three things at once: first, find the enemy as quickly as possible; second, threaten one part of the opposing alliance by a small force, to keep it occupied and tied down; and third, muster all the rest of his forces against one part of the enemy, in order to destroy it totally before turning back to deal with the remaining parts.

For this "search, delay, confuse, and destroy" method, he would divide his army into two or three "wings" and a"reserve" – with the wings under the control of trusted subordinate marshals, while the reserve (including a good part of the artillery and cavalry, as well as the elite "Guard") was kept under his own direct orders. Thus, if his forces should strike two of his enemies' armies at the same time, he could concentrate quickly. The reserve could close up on the wing chosen for the main effort. Any wing not finding strong resistance in its area could shift strength toward the battleground of the chosen wing. And any other hostile force in the area would be discovered, threatened, and even attacked by a wing chosen merely to "hold" its enemy.

It was this same strategy which the Emperor had decided to use now against Wellington's English-Dutch-Belgian army and its ally, the Prussian army of Blucher, assembled to the north and making ready to invade France. Napoleon planned to

attack with two wings and a reserve, to find the two armies by a surprise advance, to "fix" one of the Allies by one wing, and then to concentrate the bulk of his army aginst his most vulnerable opponent – destroying it, and then turning back and defeating the other, previously "fixed" ally.

Standing there at La Belle Alliance and gazing across to where the troops of Wellington's command were making ready to receive his attack, Napoleon could look back with some satisfaction upon his successes of the previous two days. Yet, despite the way in which his opponents had fallen into the trap he had set for them, and the slashing victory he had achieved against Blucher and the Prussian army, there had been little mistakes, all adding up to keep his victory from being the completely crushing one which would have assured him final victory in the campaign. He had achieved his general objectives, had set up a situation in which he would be able at last to take on personally this British commander, the Duke of Wellington, who had defeated Napoleon's marshals (but never Napoleon himself) in the long campaigns in Spain and Portugal. He had now separated Wellington from Blucher, had so badly beaten the Prussian army and sent them scampering off for safety far to the east that he would be free to turn his full attention to Wellington's motley collection of half-hearted Dutch and Belgian soldiers, joined with the stout-hearted British infantry. Yet those little gnawing mistakes must have clung to the back of his mind. Could they make a difference? Without them the victory would have been his already. Now, he had a hard battle to fight – one he felt sure he could win, as he had won so often in the past. And yet....

Three days before, on June 15, Wellington's and Blucher's armies had been spread out over many miles in the country north of the Sambre River, preparing for their own planned attack against France – quite unaware of Napoleon's decision to come north after them. Consequently, they were quite unprepared to meet the French forces when they came pouring over the river and pushing against the few units in position to resist them. Blucher had been the first to gather his forces (although one large corps, Bulow's IVth, never did make it up in time for battle). The Prussian general, still a brave and dependable soldier despite his seventy-two years, had concentrated the rest of his army in a position at Ligny, where he was determined to give battle on the 16th. Wellington, meanwhile, later in starting and less successful in concentrating quickly, managed to get only a small fraction of his force at the crossroads of Quatre Bras, about five miles northwest of the right flank of his ally Blucher's position at Ligny.

The situation was just as Napoleon had planned it. Placing his left wing under Marshal Ney, he instructed him to attack Wellington's still gathering force at Quatre Bras. Wellington would be "fixed" by this smaller force, while Napoleon took his main force against the more rewarding target – the entire Prussian army (except for the one corps not yet up).

Napoleon opened the action at 2:30 p.m. The French and Prussian armies were nearly equal in numbers, with the Prussians having a slight advantage. The French infantry attacked with their usual spirit, but the Prussians resisted stubbornly, led by their seventy-two-year-old general. Then the Emperor's soldiers gained ground, and Napoleon felt the Prussian right was now in a position to be annihilated by a powerful thrust from the west into Blucher's right flank. The troops were there to carry it out – d'Erlon's I Corps behind Quatre Bras under Ney – but not yet committed to that holding action. A message was sent to Ney directing him to dispatch d'Erlon's Corps immediately to make the winning thrust.

And then one of those little mix-ups occurred – one of those little mistakes which even a Napoleon appeared powerless to prevent.

An officer bearing the order, filled with the need for haste, delivered it to the front of d'Erlon's column, rather than to Marshal Ney, to whom it was addressed (as the latter was well forward directing the action agains the British at Quatre Bras). D'Erlon's Corps began its five-mile march to the east to undertake the ordered thrust into the Prussian right. It was getting late in the day already – yet there was still time to make the march and deliver the *coup de grace.*

And then fate, professional jealousy, or some tactical gremlin took over control. Marshal Ney, his attention centered on the hot action his smaller wing was fighting with the now steadily increasing British force at Quatre Bras, was finally informed that d'Erlon's Corps had been "stolen" from his command without the order being first delivered to him. Ignoring the larger issue, losing completely his Emperor's intent in his angry reaction, Marshal Ney sent word to d'Erlon to march his troops back to Ney at Quatre Bras.

D'Erlon's Corps, meanwhile, had traversed more than half the way to the other battle at Ligny, and his troops were now in sight of the French left wing. All that was necessary for a great French victory (early enough in the day to allow sufficient daylight for the pursuit and complete destruction of the defeated Prussians) was for this corps to march on for the short distance left and make the attack where the Emperor had directed.

Yet d'Erlon had a direct order from his immediate commander to return to his former position. He did as directed, starting his corps marching back the way they had come. And, so late in the day was it now, this act of obedience assured that his corps would not take part in either battle that day.

Napoleon, waiting for some time in vain for the corps to appear, at last had to attack without it. He succeeded, broke the Prussian line and sent it reeling back in defeat. Yet now it was getting dark, and the chance for total destruction of the Prussian army had been lost. Under cover of darkness, Blucher's men managed to hold together a few rear guard actions while the bulk of the force got away. They were defeated, it was clear. But they had not been eliminated – and their old leader was still determined to hold them together and to continue his role in the campaign, giving his ally Wellington whatever assistance he could.

Napoleon at this point could only detach his right wing under Marshal Grouchy to keep pressure on the Prussians so they could not rally enough to play a role in the next phase of the campaign. Despite his disappointment at not gaining a complete annihilation of this half of his enemy, he had won another great victory, and he was sure the Prussians were too badly beaten to be a factor in the battle against Wellington.

That iron-willed leader, meanwhile, had gained something of a victory against Napoleon's left wing under Ney at Quatre Bras. Yet after his ally's defeat, it was clear the Anglo-Dutch army would have to retreat to keep from being cut off by Napoleon's main force coming from Ligny. So the next morning, Wellington pulled back, not yet sure what he would have to do. June 17th was spent in retreat by both Wellington and Blucher – each retreating separately, out of contact with each other, but hoping somehow to bring their forces together before Napoleon could reach and destroy either of them.

Napoleon had followed Wellington and his main force, and on the morning of June 18, when he found his opponent forming to receive his attack, he was sure he had Wellington at last. Blucher, it was true, was somewhere off there to the east – but Marshal Grouchy was following him with the right wing of the French army. He would surely keep Blucher away while this fellow Wellington was dispatched.

On the other side of the valley, the Duke of Wellington, was far from happy with his circumstances. He commandd a conglomeration of units from a number of different nations (British, Dutch, Belgian, and German mercenaries). It was a rare officer who would know enough languages to communicate with all of them. Many of the Dutch and Belgian troops had formerly fought under Napoleon himself, and their sympathies had often changed very little, despite what their leaders told them to support. The Duke could depend on his own British infantry, cavalry, and artillery, and on the troops of the King's German Legion (German mercenaries trained and supported by the British, and often their equal in combat). But all together, he had only about 68,000 men – hardly enough to spare even a small number from running away at the first opportunity.

He estimated that Napoleon had a professional, well-trained, expertly mobile and nationally unified army of 110,000. He knew the Emperor would have had to send a part of his army to pursue and contain Blucher's defeated Prussians – but a small force could carry out such a mission. (Actually Grouchy had been given 35,000, leaving Napoleon with about 75,000 men to send against Wellington's patchwork army). The odds did not look good at all.

However, Wellington had told Blucher he would stand and fight the French if the Prussian could guarantee to send even one corps to him during the day of battle. And shortly before 3 a.m. had come the reply – the staunch old Prussian commander would start two corps marching at dawn to his support. Wellington knew Blucher well enough to feel he could trust him. So he had made the decision to stay and fight, regardless of the apparently uneven odds at the start of the day.

Wellington had, however, made the best possible use of his position. He had learned in his campaigns on the Iberian Peninsula the advantages of posting his infantry on the reverse slope of a ridge, where they would be at least partially protected from enemy artillery, and of using the top and forward slope of the ridge for this own artillery and skirmishes. And here in the Waterloo position he had such a ridge – with a road, usable for shifting troops, running for the most part on the protected reverse slope. Furthermore, he had three excellent fortified positions a few hundred yards to his front. On the right flank was a group of farm buildings, with their gardens, orchards, and woods, called Hougoumont. About 500 yards to the front of his line, it loomed in the French path like a huge fortress – for troops established there the previous night had been hard at work transforming its walls, buildings, lanes and other obstacles into something very little short of an actual fortress. Close enough to Wellington's line to be supported by friendly forces, Hougoumont posed a potentially expensive problem for the French. Too dangerous to leave on the flank or in the rear of an attacking force, it had sufficient defensive power to use up large numbers of attacking infantry before succumbing – if its defenders would fight with determination and courage.

Near the middle of Wellington's line, about 250 yards to its front, was another, smaller structure, the farm of La Haye Sainte. Located on the Brussels-Charleroi road, which cut through the middle of the battlefield, this group of farm buildings, with their farmyard, garden, and orchard-pasture, surrounded by walls or banked and ditched hedges, also presented a formidable obstacle. And finally, on the left flank, were two farms (La Haye and Papelotte) and a nearby hamlet (Smohain), all of whose buildings could be used to advantage by defending forces.

Wellington had sent forces to occupy these positions, had deployed his infantry generally on the reverse slope of the ridge line (except in an area where the ridge structure and the location of the road forced him to leave some forces on the forward, unprotected side). He had cavalry on both wings, but a very large group of his heavy cavalry was located near the center of his postion, behind the infantry line. He had carefully mixed his forces, interspersing the less dependable Dutch and Belgian forces among the more trustworthy British infantry and King's German Legion.

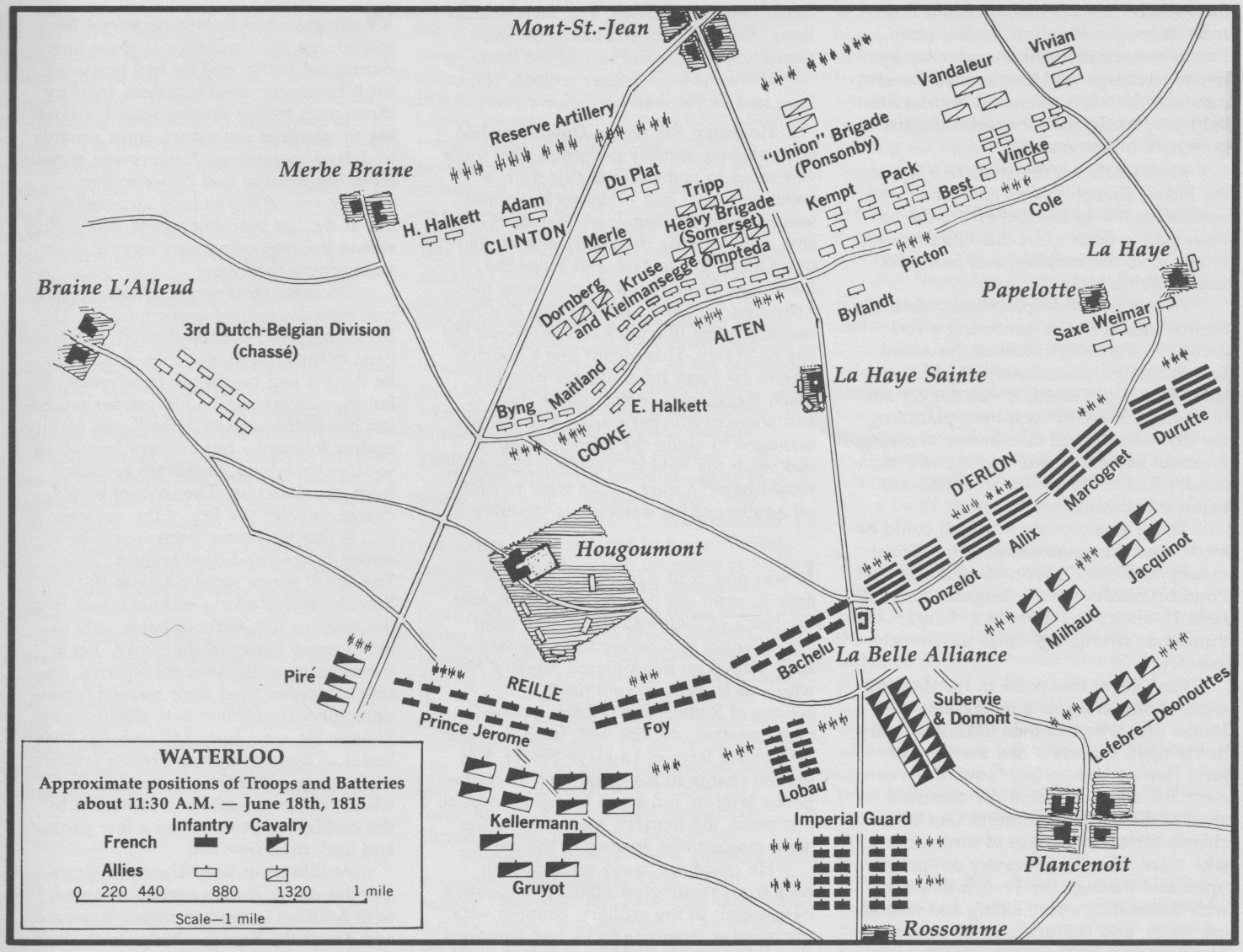
So he had done the best he could. Now it would be a matter of trying to get his troops to hang on until the promised support came from Blucher's troops to the east – if indeed it came and in time to do any good. There would be no tricky tactical footwork here. His play was to defend, to hold on somehow, keeping control of the battle in his own hands, ever aware of what was happening on all parts of the field, and shifting his scanty forces as quickly as possible to meet each new crisis as it arose. Unlike Napoleon, who would most often place the actual battlefield leadership in the hands of his marshals, Wellington insisted on being all places at once, making decisions, giving commands, leading, inspiring, setting an example. He would have his hands full this day.

Napoleon, having observed the terrain and the dispositions of his opponent, retired to a position at the rear and center of his force and prepared his own plans. He had been convinced, apparently by arguments that the artillery would not be able to maneuver through the wet ground until the sun had dried it more, to postpone his attack until nearly noon. It was 11:30 a.m. when the action began.

His plan was simple – to mass his large number of artillery pieces and pour caseshot into the Anglo-Dutch troops, to attack with d'Erlon's Corps against the center, to the right of the Brussels-Charleroi road, while Reille's Corps attacked to the left of the road, directing much of its force against the Hougoumont position. Lobau's Corps would be held in reserve at first – as would the "Old Immortals" of the Guard. His large formations of cavalry would also be held back for the right moment, when the fierce artillery bombardment and the infantry attacks had weakened the power and will of Wellington's motley array. Then it would come – the flashing attacks of the cavalry, followed by the final blow, the attack of the Imperial Guard itself. The Allied center would sag and crumble, letting the Emperor once again shatter his enemy to bits. It was the plan of a man confident in himself and his troops – the same kind of plan that had worked for him again and again.

The Battle of Waterloo was a confused struggle of many forces, with thousands of men engaged in desperate fighting for long periods of time. Yet a kind of order appears when the battle is considered, as some have suggested, as a drama made up of five distinct acts. The opening of the first curtain would reveal the attack of Reille's Corps against the Allied right – with much of the action centering on the bastion of Hougoumont. After a supporting bombardment of French artillery, Reille's infantry moved out in assault. Very quickly his troops became enmeshed in a hot fight for the wood, orchard, and buildings of the Hougoumont farm. Anglo-Dutch forces there put up a fanatical defense, being driven back gradually into the more easily defended area in and around the farm buildings. There, though hard-pressed, they held on. More and more troops were drawn into the battle here, but still these hard-fighting infantrymen held, fighting from behind walls, ditches, trees. What was to have been a diversionary attack had become an expensive and compelling struggle.

While this attack was proceeding, the area of the main attack was being softened up by the French artillery. A battery of



84 guns poured its fire into the Allied line, concentrating especially on the central section near the La Haye Sainte farm. Here d'Erlon's Corps was ordered to drive a wedge through the Anglo-Dutch line. But before that attack could be launched, just the hint of a threat to Napoleon's army was first noted. Way off to the northeast, the Emperor noticed what turned out to be a "cloud" of men coming out of the woods of a village some four or five miles away. A little worm of doubt may have entered his mind. Could it be that Blucher somehow escaped Marshal Grouchy's containing force and succeeded in getting a significant part of his army this close to his British ally? For now, it was only a small group of men who were visible. Lobau was directed to place his Corps where he could defend against a sudden attack from this new direction. So much for that. It was now 1:30 and time to get on with d'Erlon's massive attack against the Anglo-Dutch center and left – the second act of the great drama.

The attack was truly a strong one. There were four divisions in the corps, and they attacked abreast. However, three of them chose a formation which worked to their disadvantage. They advanced in "column of division by battalion" – probably because of a mistaken transmission of an order asking for "column of battalion by division." This meant that, instead of advancing with one battalion beside another, and thus presenting a long front with full firepower, each of the three divisions advanced with their battalions in column one behind the other – a very dense formation with a small front, and consequently extremely vulnerable to fire, while enabling its infantry to return fire only from its foremost battalion.

Presented with such an appealing target, the British artillery went to work with great effect, plowing its shot into deep masses of humanity. This gave the British a great advantage, for the French artillery preparation had been largely ineffective, as its target, Wellington's infantry, for the most part had been able to shelter themselves by lying down on the reverse slope of the ridge. Here only a small proportion of the French shot could reach them – most of it either passing over, or falling short on the forward slope.

The French attack extended all the way from the Brussels-Charleroi road (including the La Haye Sainte farm) to the eastern flank of the Anglo-Dutch line at the farm of Papelotte. The one division (Durutte's) that advanced in a more sensible, less dense formation, met with some success, actually driving the Anglo-Dutch forces out of Papelotte. A second success was gained when a Belgian brigade (which had been one of the few not sheltered by the ridge during Napoleon's artillery bombardment, and had also had serious losses two days before at Quatre Bras) ran from their forward position before the French column had come within a hundred yards. But when the dense columns approached the sturdy British infantry of Picton's brigades, they met a solid wall of fire. Unable to return anywhere near an equal amount of fire from their crowded column formation,

the French battalions were caught in a truly desperate situation. At this point, Picton himself shouted an order for his troops to charge, and they rushed forward manfully. In a few moments, a great fire-fight was taking place between the two groups of infantrymen.

Meanwhile, on the western edge of the attack, French troops had driven their opponents out of the orchard of the La Haye Sainte farm – but the Allied forces retreated to the building and farmyard and continued to hold out.

At this point, despite their losses, the French infantry were becoming a real danger to the eastern half of the Allied line. Although actual losses of positions had been as yet slight, it was not certain how much more of such hard pounding the defenders could take before breaking. To make matters worse, a group of French cavalry had badly cut up an Allied battalion it had caught in the open.

There was one move which could be made, and the commander of the British cavalry made it. Ordering Somerset's and Ponsoby's heavy cavalry brigades forward, Lord Uxbridge led them in a charge, thousands strong, right into the French infantry.

Cavalry, at this point in the development of warfare, was a remarkably effective arm when thrown against infantry in the open (unless it had the time to form into hedgehog-like "square" to recieve the attack). And in the confused state of the battle now, there was little chance for such changes of formation to take place. The British cavlry swept down upon and through the French infantry with devastating effect, killing and wounding many, and capturing 3,000 prisoners. The French infantry ran toward its rear, seeking protection from this horde of horsemen. With this charge, the entire attack of d'Erlon's Corps was broken, and that large part of Napoleon's army had lost a quarter of its total force. Even the farm of Papelotte, on the left extremity, was soon regained by Wellington's troops. There was thus almost nothing to show for the great expenditure of French soldiers.

However, there was one major gain for the French. The British cavalry, lost in its own sense of triumph, did not stop after breaking the French infantry of d'Erlon, but raced on to strike the line of French artillery behind them. They had gone too far. Napoleon promptly sent waves of his own cavalry from both flanks against the British horsemen, now totally without formation and riding blown horses. The effect was immediate. The British were forced to try to retire to their own lines as best they could – and many were cut down before they could make it back. In the whole operation, the two brigades of British heavy cavalry had lost more than one-third of its force; its horses were exhausted, and these formations, despite their great success, were nearly useless for the rest of the battle.

It was now past three o'clock. Napoleon had as yet won no major victory.

However, the Anglo-Dutch line had been shaken, terribly punished, and there was more to come. Yet at this time, a message which had ominous overtones was received by Napoleon. Marshal Grouchy, commanding the right wing many miles away to the east, and given the mission of pursuing and containing the Prussians, had sent word saying that he was following Blucher's forces toward the city of Wavre. This meant that Grouchy was so far away he could not possibly reach Napoleon's forces before dark – and some of Blucher's army had already managed to elude the French marshal and reach the field at Waterloo. Napoleon would have to hurry, if he were to pull off another of his miraculous victories.

It was now 3:30 p.m. There was still time to push the Anglo-Dutch units past the brink of their endurance and send them fleeing in disarray from the battlefield. Napoleon first ordered Marshal Ney, who was in general command of the actions of Reille's and d'Erlon's corps, to make another attempt with fresh infantry against the farm of La Haye Sainte. Ney led the charge in his usual brashly courageous fashion, but again he failed. And at this point, the marshal made one of the most momentous desions of the day.

He could see many men moving back from Wellington's line. The constant harassment of the artillery, coupled with the massive infantry attacks, had wounded many and discouraged others. Seeing a steady stream of men retiring from the battle, Marshal Ney felt that Wellington's line was close to the breaking point. Thus, he chose to hurl one of the French army's most effective weapons – its veteran cavalry – without further delay. He ordered Milhaud's entire Corps of Cuirassiers to attack the British right, between the strong points of Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte. For some reason the leader of Napoleon's Light Horse of the Guard, although he had received no orders, decided to support Milhaud's force with his own. The whole body, 43 squadrons, made up of 5,000 superb horsemen, rode to the attack.

Wellington had known he would have to undergo this challenge at some time during the battle, and he had prepared for it by giving specific orders. Infantry threatened by the cavalry would, according to standard procedure, form squares to defend themselves. Artillerymen stationed to the front of and between the squares would fire as long as possible, but at the last moment would take refuge within the nearest square, leaving their guns where they were.

On came the French cuirassiers at a trot, well-disciplined and confident. The British artillery, double-shotted, tore huge gaps in their ranks, but they would not be denied and continued to advance. At last the artillerymen had to run for protection inside the square. Thus it was cavalry against infantry – but infantry formed in squares to defend itself from an attack from any direction. The cavalry would charge, receive the fire of the squares, and failing to shatter them would be forced to split and flow around them. The result was a stand-off, with the French cavalry taking serious losses from the infantry fire, without being able to inflict many losses of their own. Yet at the same time, the infantry squares, unable to deploy from their massed formations for fear of immediate slaughter by the cavalry, were forced to undergo heavy losses of their own from French artillery pouring shot into their massed ranks, while French skirmishers, protected by the cavalry, crept to within a few yards and took their own toll.

At this point Lord Uxbridge, commander of the British cavalry, charged with 5,000 as yet uncommitted horsemen and drove the French cavalry back. This entire series of events was then repeated again – the French cuirasssiers attacking, taking fire from the British artillery, then overrunning the guns but being unable to prevail against the staunch squares checkerboarding the terrain, and finally being driven off by the counter-attacking British cavalry.

It was nearly 5:00 p.m. and the Emperor, knowing that Ney launched the cavalry too soon, nevertheless decided the attack must be supported. So he ordered Kellerman's four brigades of cavalry to join the assault. This group, plus other attached units and all those who had launched the first attack and were still capable of battle – a total of 9,000 horsemen and 80 squadrons – were thrown into the renewed attack against the British squares. There followed during the next hour a series of some of the most dramatic moments of military history, with cavalry charges being mounted again and again – only to fail before the obstinate firmness of the artillery, the stubborn infantry squares, and the counter-attacking British cavalry. With-

out the support of accompanying infantry and horse artillery, the great French attacks failed. But they had weakened the Allied squares still more, and it seemed only a question of time before these must finally crack, splinter, and rush away to the rear. Yet the French cavalry were now depleted in men and morale, and nothing tangible had been accomplished. Only at the very end had 6,000 infantry been sent in to attack La Haye Sainte once more – and again the attack failed.

Perhaps what prevented Napoleon from risking all and throwing in his infantry reserves along with the cavalry had been the ominous events to the east. Bulow's 30,000-man Prussian IVth Corps had finally reached the battlefield. They had attacked out of the Paris woods, and advanced all the way to the buildings of the small town of Plancenoit, disturbingly close to Napoleon's left rear and line of communications. The Emperor had ordered Duhesme, commander of the Young Guard, to attack and restore the situation. This goal was immediately accomplished, and Bulow's Prussians were driven out of the town.

The situation was still in Napoleon's control. Yet now men from two other Prussian corps (Perch I's and Zieten's) were beginning to arrive near the field of battle. Already Napoleon was being distracted from his main goal – driving Wellington's army into a headlong retreat – by this gathering force on his right flank.

Now at 6:00 p.m., it was clearly time for the Emperor to take firm measures to turn the battle his way with quick finality. He began by ordering Marshal Ney to take La Haye Sainte without fail – regardless of cost. The little force of nine companies inside that bastion was already in desperate shape. Having lost the greater part ot their men already, and down to a few rounds of ammunition per man, further resistance seemed impossible. Yet the men stayed on, as the new infantry attack bore down on them. Fighting stubbornly, they were finally driven out of the building and into the garden, at which point the commander, Major Baring, saw there was nothing to do but let his men return to the main British line a few hundred yards behind them. A final check revealed that, of the 400 men who had been sent into that position that morning, only 42 returned to take up their positions in the line that night.

So at last the key position in Wellington's center had fallen. Marshal Ney immediately tried to mount a further assault on the main line, using any troops that were still capable of attacking after their long day of battle. The chances were good that he could succeed, for all along the line, and especially in center, Wellington's formations had thinned appreciably.

To make matters worse for the British, the young Prince of Orange, an unwanted corps commander under Wellington, insisted that Colonel Ompteda, commander of a battalion of the King's German Legion, deploy his men and attack some French infantry to his front. Ompteda explained that such a move would lead to nothing except his unit's destruction, as a group of French cuirassiers were in the area and would pounce on the vulnerable infantry. Still the young Prince insisted, and Ompteda manfully led the charge and beat back the French infantry. Then, just as he had predicted, his entire battalion was annihilated by the French cavalry's immediate counter-charges. At the conclusion of the debacle, less than 20 men were left of the battalion, and Ompteda himself was killed in carrying out the young Prince's ridiculous order.

Other units had suffered nearly as badly, and now Wellington's line was filled with ragged gaps. In one area near the center, a captain had to go to Wellington and inform him that an entire stretch between two brigades was completely empty. Wellington, calm as ever, found some units to throw in to keep at least the semblance of a line. Many of the formations pulled back from their first positions, and the trickle of men moving to the rear was continuing and threatening to grow. Still, the "Iron Duke" made no plans for retreat. His intent was to hold the position to the last man – and to trust to Blucher to fulfill his word and get his formations closed up and on to the field in field.

Blucher's foremost corps, Bulow's, was indeed making itself felt. It had retaken Plancenoit and again was threatening Napoleon's line of retreat. The Emperor, again taking units from his carefully treasured Guard, sent two battalions of the Old Guard to throw back the Prussians. As ordered, these elite units marched toward the town without firing a shot, and by the force of bayonets alone soon had every Prussian out of the town and in wild retreat hundreds of yards behind it. The Guard continued its attack right up to the Prussian guns, even capturing some of them. But Bulow, realizing that the attack was only two small units, and not by the whole Guard itself, gathered every unit he could and struck back in force. The Guard yielded, slowly, and in perfect order. But they still held Plancenoit, and they had given the French officers a chance to rally most of Lobau's Corps and the Young Guard. Napoleon still had a chance to make the day his. There was still the main body of the Guard to throw at the weakened Anglo-Dutch center. But of all the Guard troops he had intended to save for the final blow, only about 5,000 had not yet been committed. It was going to be close.

The last act of the drama was about to begin, and Wellington and Napoleon made their preparations. For the Duke, it was largely a matter of bringing up what few reinforcements he could to his shaken line. With the Prussian Corps of Zieten moving up on his left, he could bring his two cavalry brigades from that flank back behind his center. Earlier, his right flank force at Braine l'Alleud had been ordered in and was beginning to appear. There was little else he could do.

For Napoleon, it was now the last moment for decision. He took the chance and ordered five battalions of his Guard, almost his last reserve, to prepare for the role they had always played in his past battles – making that last paralyzing strike which could sweep a still-resisting enemy from the field. It was now after 7:00 p.m., and the sun was getting low in the western sky. But there was still time to win a battle that would shake the world.

The five battalions were formed up in three separate echelons and directed to attack – not directly at the center beyond the now-captured La Haye Sainte – but rather to its left, between that point and Hougoumont. The battalions of the Guard advanced with their traditional awesome discipline, marching at shoulder arms without the least wavering toward their objective. As the British guns began to pour shot into them, tearing gaps in their ranks, they closed up and came on as if indeed "immortal" and unaffected by mortal opposition.

One echelon, made up of two battalions, met and swept aside a formation of Brunswickers, then advanced into some British guns, and finally were confronted by four regiments of Halkett's brigade – two of which began to waver. It appeared that at last the final blow, punching a hole clear through Wellington's line, had come. But just then support arrived. General Chasse, in command of the Dutch-Belgian division stationed some distance away at Braine l'Alleud and previously ordered in, ran a battery of horse artillery up to batter the Guard with grape-shot. They then sent in a Dutch-Belgian brigade of infantry to the left of the British troops and put them in a bayonet charge which swept the French Guard battalion to the bottom of the slope. The second Guard battalion in the echelon was held off by Halkett's 33rd and 69th regiments, which rose to the occasion despite their own battered condition. So this French attack also failed.

The second echelon, also made up of two battalions, marched in perfect order toward the ridge held by the British and seemed about to break through. But before them rose up a line of British Guards, who poured crashing volley after volley into the massed French Guard. Simultaneously, British artillerymen blasted them

with grape-shot as fast as they could fire their guns. The French Guard held firm for a number of minutes, although they could make no more headway against the murderous fire. Then the British Guards were sent forward by their commander in a bayonet charge which swept the French down the hill.

But then out of the smoke of battle came the third and final echelon of the Imperial Guard. Hurriedly the British returned to their previous position to receive the attack – this time by a single battalion. While they poured in the fire from the front, General Adam's brigade rushed up to fire into the battalion from the flank. Even the men from Hougoumont, able at last to attack after a day of desperate defense of their improvised fortification, ran out to fire into the Guard's rear. It was too much, even for the "old immortals" – and they too were at last pushed down the slope.

And so the end came suddenly and with little warning. Wellington, seeing the Guard's attack shattered and the whole French army beginning to break before them, waved his hat in a motion which everyone understood. It was time for a general advance by the entire Anglo-Dutch army. The two fresh cavalry brigades, just brought in to the center from the left flank, were sent tearing into the retreating French ranks. The Prussian corps, all three of them now joined in a solid line with Wellington's troops, swept forward as well.The tired veterans of the French army began to wash away like grains of sand in a flood.

Here and there Napoleon or other officers managed to momentarily stem the tide by forming one of the Guard units into a square which would hold firm for a time –until it too was engulfed and swept away. At 9:00 p.m. Wellington and Blucher, the two faithful commanders, met briefly at La Belle Alliance. There it was decided that the Prussians, by far the freshest troops, would continue the pursuit during the night.

The Prussians pursued with vigor. Napoleon himself was nearly caught, so closely did the Prussian horsemen follow the wildly fleeing remnants of the French Army.

And so it was over – perhaps the greatest battle in military history. And in a matter of weeks, Napoleon himself would be gone – to another, smaller island, from which he would escape only in death a few short years later.

But the Duke of Wellington, as he wearily rode back for a night's sleep, seemed to feel no sense of triumph. His army had lost more than *fifteen thousand* men in the day's battle – and many of them were close friends from his staff, or commanders who had served long and well under him. It was, he later said, a near-run thing – and a battle he hoped never to have to fight again.

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